Bellingcat Hackathons Grading Rubric

August 17, 2022

Each hackathon submission will be judged based on the following four criteria:
- Imagination of solution
    - Does a similar tool already exist?
    - How well does the tool address a need in the digital investigation community?
- Technical innovation
    - How novel is the tool? Is it a straightforward extension of an existing tool vs. are there techniques or "exploits" that haven't been used or exposed in an existing tool?
- Working solution
    - Can the tool be successfully installed and used?
    - How well does the tool achieve its stated objectives?
    - How complete is the tool vs. how much does it rely on mockup data
- Potential positive impact
    - How widely could the tool be used: can it only be used in very niche investigations vs. more general purpose?
    - How significantly the tool reduces the burden on digital investigation researchers, i.e. does the tool save five minutes vs. five hours.
    - Would applications of this tool have a clear positive impact on the world? Could it clearly be applied to advance human rights, tackle climate change, inequalities, transparency, or other causes?

The following criteria *do not play a role* in the judging process (so we recommend not spending significant time on them):
- Code quality
    - Presence or lack of documentation/comments
    - Architecture/use of software design patterns
- Non-functional visuals and aesthetics
    - How pretty/polished any frontend or graphical user interface looks
      (NB: We do take usability into consideration)

Due to the compressed timeline for the hackathon, it is acceptable to use mockup data as inputs, as long as you're explicit and transparent about it. For example, if you run out of time to implement an API that fetches some data, include a few examples of what the API response would have been, and show how it integrates into your tool.

However, don't rely too heavily on mockups: if your entire tool is a mockup, it's difficult to judge its usefulness.